

### Review in brief: Moving lives: narratives of nation and migration among Europeans in post-war Britain. By Kathy Burrell. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd. 2006. ISBN 0754645746

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This is a book situated between the fields of literary, media, and cultural studies, geography, architecture, and history. Its focus – the emerging ‘spatial turn’ in studies of modernist literature, art, architecture and more – is a fascinating one. But despite this the book is strangely uneven and rather disappointing. The introduction to a collection like this needs to set a clear agenda, but it does little more than suggest that historicist criticism should involve some consideration of space. What this might mean is largely left to the contributors, who seem equally uncertain.

I hope this isn’t just a disciplinary twitch on my part but none of the contributors are geographers, and beyond the usual suspects there isn’t much discussion of the discipline (though postcolonial historians of cartography, empire and nation are better represented). Does this matter? Well, Andreas Huyssen’s chapter seems to be mired in the debates about the ‘global’ and the ‘local’ which bothered geographers in the late 1990s. Jon Heggland’s account of Graham Greene’s travel writing is also weirdly familiar, like it fell out of Barnes and Duncan’s *Writing worlds*. Heggland concludes ‘Perhaps we can take one of modernism’s trademark aesthetic elements – the multiplication of perspectives – and fruitfully apply it to the way we imagine the very nature and history of geographical space’ (p. 53). I was hoping that the contributors to this volume might have *started* from this point, not ended there.

So the most interesting stories are those that are least familiar: Rebecca Beasley on the British intelligentsia’s engagement with Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, for example, or James Housefields’ subtle and insightful reading of Duchamp as ‘traveller and geographer’. Or those that mix the familiar and unfamiliar to produce something novel, like James Donald’s provocative discussion of modernist mediations of space and time, or Andrew Thacker’s chapter on Imagism and Orientalism. But in the end it wasn’t the sense of missed opportunities that bothered me – after all, interdisciplinary work isn’t easy and geographers have been slow to catch on to developments in literary criticism – but that the casually historicist approach of some contributors seems as uninterested in history as it is in geography. In a few chapters history seems to be a pretty simple thing, a cultural ‘moment’ of a particular and unproblematic type, and space and cultural production are treated as expressions of this. This strangely uncritical approach compromises what might have been much more than just another eclectic set of essays.

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JAMES KNEALE

**Moving lives: narratives of nation and migration among Europeans in post-war Britain.** By Kathy Burrell. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd. 2006. xix + 212 pp. £50 cloth. ISBN 0754645746.

Burrell’s book *Moving lives* is a powerful counter-argument against those globalization theories that downplay the role of nation-states in our modern societies. Taking three migrant groups living in Leicester – Poles, Greek-Cypriots and Italians – Burrell tests the applicability of national identity theories to migrants and artfully uncovers the complexity of migrants’ national identity

which is constantly negotiated, constructed, reconstructed, manipulated, but still preserved. An important part of the definition of migrants' national identity is based upon constructive relationship with the fellow nationals and local community, but also upon religious, national and even regional othering. She argues that what it means to be Polish, Greek-Cypriot or Italian in the UK can only be understood if studied through the prism of Billig's (1995) 'banal nationalism.' It is the everyday social practices that people undertake that define their national identity.

At the same time migration itself has a significant impact on national identity. The author chooses these national groups in order to highlight differences between migration experiences of exiles and voluntary migrants. While Polish migration narratives focus on traumatic migration experiences, memories of which are transmitted to later generations born in the UK, Greek-Cypriots and Italians emphasize the efforts they put into establishing themselves in the immigration country. However, the author convincingly argues that migration is never simple: even in the case of 'forced' migration there is still scope for personal decisions, while in 'voluntary' migration there can be an aspect of pressing family circumstances.

Burrell is also concerned to explore the importance of national territory for the preservation of migrants' national identity. Just like identity, homeland is individually constructed from selective accounts of the national history. This serves the function of projecting the intended image of homeland, but may also result in the dislocation between territory, time and memory. She provides a number of examples that illustrate how norms and values of homeland travel with migrants and find their new home in the immigrants' national community.

This book enriches the existing literature in the field by its comparative perspective on individualized accounts of the nation and migration and will be interesting to students and researchers working in the area of national identity, migration and diasporas as well as those with a specific interest in the Polish, Greek-Cypriot and Italian communities.

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**Decolonizing the colonial city: urbanization and stratification in Kingston, Jamaica.**

By Colin Clarke. Oxford: Oxford University Press Inc. 2006. xxv + 298 pp. £85.00 cloth. ISBN 0-19-926981-5.

Colin Clarke has succeeded in providing a comprehensive analysis of Kingston's social and cultural transformations from colonization, through independence, to the post-colonial period. The wealth of empirical knowledge in this longitudinal study is derived from census data for 10 per cent of the households for Kingston in 1960 and 1991, and enumeration district data for the city in 1943, 1960, 1982 and 1991. Using these data Clarke has substantially demonstrated the combined influences of colonialism and its legacies, and the imposition of structural adjustment programmes in (re)shaping this city's colour-class-culture dimensions both spatially and temporally. Through the use of correlations, cross-tabulations, indices of dissimilarity and isolation, cartography and several plates he has adequately captured the dynamic spatial dimensions of social processes and the social dimensions of spatial processes.